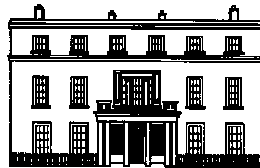


**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of French**  
**REPORT**

**St Augustine's College**  
**Dungarvan, County Waterford**  
**Roll number: 64890W**

**Date of inspection: 6 May 2015**



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF**  
**OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION**  
**AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

**REPORT  
ON  
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN FRENCH**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	5 and 6 May 2015
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during six class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good with very good practice noted in some lessons.
- The use of French as the language of instruction varied from the limited use noted in some lessons to consistent use in others.
- A range of methodologies was observed, many of which were used to good or very good effect.
- There is good whole-school support and provision for French.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- French should be used as the language of instruction in all lessons and students should be afforded greater opportunities to communicate in the target language with both the teacher and their peers.
  - Teachers should make greater use of strategies that promote active participation from all students.
  - The practice of giving formative feedback should be developed as a means of informing students of their ongoing progress.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

St Augustine's College is a voluntary co-educational secondary school with 686 students. It has a mixed socio-economic catchment and serves the town of Dungarvan and its hinterland. It offers the Junior Certificate, Transition Year (TY), Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The study of a modern European language is mandatory in junior cycle and optional in senior cycle.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- Competent teaching was observed in all of the lessons evaluated, with some very good and excellent practice noted in some lessons. Areas for development include extending the use of the target language and, in some instances, adopting methodologies which promote more active student engagement.
- The use of French as the language of instruction varied. It was spoken consistently by the teachers in some lessons, while in others there was increased reliance on English as the lesson progressed. In lessons where the target language was used to a lesser degree, student comprehension should be further challenged. Where scaffolding is required, alternative strategies to translation should be adopted. Greater opportunities for student-teacher and student-student interactions in the target language should also be provided.
- Good practice was noted in lessons where learning objectives were shared with the students. All teachers should begin their lessons by articulating the intended learning outcomes for the lesson. These outcomes should be reviewed at the end of the lesson in order to assess student progress.
- A range of methodologies was observed, many of which were used to good or very good effect. Question and answer sessions were used in all lessons, but in some instances the same students answered all questions. Teachers should introduce some of the assessment for learning (AfL) strategies for the purpose of ensuring full student participation in lessons.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) was used in many instances to support learning. It was most effective where the video-clips chosen and the supporting worksheets guided the lesson throughout in French and structured the learning. This good practice should be extended to all lessons.
- Listening texts, followed by information-retrieval style questions, were used in some lessons for the purpose of aural skills development. Teachers should consider varying the follow-up activities to include answering questions in French and creating dialogues using the vocabulary from the texts. This would make students more aware of how listening skills can be transferred to support oral and writing skills development. It would also afford greater opportunities for differentiation during lessons.
- Pair or group work was observed in the majority of lessons. In instances where it was less effective, it is recommended that greater attention be paid to the purpose of the task which, if for oral skills development, must necessitate interaction. It is recommended that pair or group work activities for the purpose of extending students' oral skills be incorporated into all lessons.
- Song was used to support learning and this is good practice as it enhances the enjoyment of the lesson. The use of placemat activities was very effective in one lesson to support individual student work feeding into a group task.

- All students were well behaved and receptive to learning. Learning was most effective in lessons where students were challenged to understand in French, where there was a good balance between whole class instruction and the use of individual and group activities and where active student interaction with the teacher and with peers was facilitated. There were some lessons where greater attention to the pace of the lesson and more active student engagement is recommended.
- Many of the homework corrections observed in students' copybooks inspected were summative. It is recommended that the practice of formative feedback be developed to inform and incrementally support student progress. This would further support the good student uptake of higher level and the attainment noted in the certificate examination outcomes.

### **SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- There is good whole-school provision and support for French in the allocation of time, timetabling and the provision of resources including ICT.
- Classrooms are teacher based in most instances and this is good practice. A print-rich environment has been developed in all language-based rooms and there was one classroom where very good work has been carried out in creating posters of key expressions useful for supporting revision and examination preparation. The seating arrangements in another classroom facilitated ease of movement for group work and it is recommended that all teachers consider adopting a similar seating plan.
- All teachers reported engaging in continuing professional development (CPD) and this is commended. To further this good practice, teachers should inform themselves about and consider availing of the range of summer scholarships and short courses in both Ireland and France to support linguistic and pedagogical upskilling including the use of ICT and its wide range of applications to support the teaching of modern languages.
- The school should consider initiatives such as e-twinning for the purpose of developing links with French schools and promoting intercultural dialogue.

### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The minutes of subject planning meetings indicate that the issues discussed are primarily of an organisational nature. In order to progress subject planning for development and improvement it is recommended that greater discussion of teaching and learning, assessment and the sharing of ideas and good practice be incorporated into subject planning meetings.
- Considerable work has been completed in subject planning for French. Schemes of work have been developed setting out the objectives, the general methodologies used, the resources and the assessment protocols. However, these schemes are predominantly based on the textbooks in use at present. It is recommended that, over time, the members of the French department create schemes of work focusing on the development of transferable linguistic skills through the use of a topic approach that is less textbook bound.
- Planning for an effective TY programme has focused to date on a modular approach to the teaching and learning of French. However, given the context of current timetabling and TY activities a review of the French programme is recommended in favour of more

stand-alone lessons with follow-through assignments. The inclusion of a remediation module negotiated with the learners is also recommended.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.